

MARROW AND FATNESS

NO. 1166

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, MARCH 29, 1874,
BY C. H. SPURGEON,
AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, Who am I, O Lord GOD?
and what is my house, that you have brought me hitherto? And this was yet
a small thing in your sight, O Lord GOD; but you have spoken also
of your servant's house for a great while to come. And is this
the manner of man, O Lord GOD? And what can David
say more unto you? for you, Lord GOD, know your servant.
For your word's sake, and according to your own heart, have you
done all these great things, to make your servant know them.
Wherefore you are great, O LORD God: for there is none like you,
neither is there any God beside you, according to all that we have heard with our ears.”
2 Samuel 7:18-22.*

DAVID was overwhelmed with the mercy of God, Nathan's message was too much for him. He felt emotions in his bosom which he could not express. Like a wise man, he went at once, while under the impulse of gratitude, into the place of nearness to God. It was not every one who might go in and sit before the Lord as he did, but he felt he had a special call to draw near unto the Most High, and there he sat him down in the posture of waiting to receive the fulfillment of what was promised, in the posture of rest, as one who had now all that he could desire, and was pressed down under the weight of blessing. Yet the psalmist's sitting was also a posture of worship, and surely of all passages of Scripture none can be said to contain more true adoration than that which is now before us.

The king sat, however, *before the Lord*. The mercy had all come from God, and therefore to God all his praise was offered. His soul waited only upon the Lord, because his expectation was alone from Him. He was conscious of being in the sacred presence, and he sat there, feeling that by the covenant blessing he had been brought very near, and his spirit exulted in that nearness.

Brethren and sisters in Christ, the mercies which God has shown to us are as great as those which He manifested to His servant David, and if the Spirit of God has opened our eyes to see and understand them we may this morning ardently wish to do precisely what David did. Let us have boldness to enter into the nearest possible fellowship with God—yea, let us go where David could not go, within the veil, and there, where Christ has opened up the way through His rent body, let us sit down in a restful, waiting, happy spirit, and give full play to all those divine emotions which ought to be aroused by reflecting upon the loving-kindness of the Lord.

I have selected this subject because there are many among us who have lately found the Savior, and it is well to let them see the happiness which belongs to them, the pleasures and the treasures which are theirs in Christ Jesus, that they may render unto the God of grace the glory which is due unto His name.

David did not understand the words of Nathan to relate merely to his dynasty and to his dominion over the house of Israel. He looked far beyond temporal things, and therefore in the words before us there is a spiritual depth which will not strike the eye of the casual reader. The New Testament must be the expositor of the Old, and Peter, in his famous sermon gives us the key to this passage. Turn to Acts 2:29, and you will find that Peter accounts for a memorable utterance of David in the Psalms by declaring that he was a prophet, and knew that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. The joy which filled David's bosom was a spiritual one because he knew that Jesus would come of his race, and that an everlasting

kingdom would be set up in His person, and in Him should the Gentiles trust. Now, then, we also, being blest with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, are bound to feel as David felt, and therefore we shall pass in review David's expressions, with the desire that we may drop into the same mood. May God the Holy Ghost, who alone can enable us to do so, bless our meditation at this time.

I. First I shall need you to notice THE HUMILITY apparent in David's words.

"Then went King David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, *Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that you have brought me hitherto?*"

First, he owned *the lowliness of his origin*—"What is my house?" He came not of royal blood. Nathan spoke the truth when he said in the Lord's name, "I took you from the sheepcote, from following the sheep." He was but a humble shepherd lad when he was first anointed, and after that anointing he continued in that humble office. From this he rose to become the leader of a motley band of free-lances exiled from their country, yet the Lord was pleased to call him from his low estate to make him king over the chosen people.

Beloved, what is our origin? What is there about our descent that could claim for us the high privilege of being sons of God? Trace our origin to its most ancient source, and behold sin is there, staining the escutcheon of our house. All down the line there is a taint of high treason against the divine majesty, we come of a race of rebels, and our own personal birth was marred with sin. Heraldry lends no pomp to us, and the genealogist for the most of us reveals no hereditary glories, and even if he did they would be mere fancies and fictions, not worthy to be mentioned before the presence of the Lord. "Who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house?"

David laid the most stress upon *his own personal unworthiness*. He said, "Who am I? What was there in me that you should make me a king, and a progenitor of the Christ?" And will not each believer here say the same? Who am I? What is there in me? God might have chosen the great and the mighty of the world, but He has passed them by, He might have chosen the learned and famous, but not many of them are called, He has chosen the poor of this world and things that are despised, yea, the base things has God chosen, and the things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are, that no flesh might glory in His presence.

Look at yourself from head to foot, examine every cranny of your heart, and every single feature of your character, can you see anything there that might command JEHOVAH'S esteem, any qualifications for being bought with redeeming blood, any reasons why you should be made sons of God, and heirs of Glory? The Lord had reasons for choosing you, for He acts according to the counsel of His will, but those reasons are not in you, they lie in His own bosom, and you must exclaim, "Who am I that you have brought me hitherto?" I have no doubt that David looked upon his own deservings—what if I correct myself and say his own undeservings?—and marveled that the Lord had chosen him and rejected Saul. He was a man after God's own heart, but his conduct was that of a bold, rough soldier, and he could not look upon it without observing its imperfections.

He prayed in the twenty-fifth Psalm, "Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions: according to your mercy remember you me for your goodness' sake, O LORD." These sins are not recorded in the chronicles of his life, but they were written in his own penitent memory, and being humbled concerning them he cried, "Who am I?" There must have been many an action in his exile and wanderings which he did not rejoice to remember, for instance, his mimicry of madness before the king of Gath, his great anger against Nabal, and his affinity with the Philistines, and besides such prominent errors as these, he could see many failings and transgressions all along, and these both made the grace of God the more illustrious, and led him to cry from his very heart—"Who am I, O Lord God?"

Now, brethren and sisters, look back upon your own lives before conversion. What were they? Let them be blotted out with tears. Consider your lives since conversion, and confess that whenever you have been left to yourselves, and the grace of God has withdrawn for a while, you have always stumbled into some form or other of deplorable folly. Who am I? What have I done? What have I been? How is it

that I am made your child, purchased with the blood of Jesus, and made an heir of heaven? We may sum it all up in that exclamation, “Why me, Lord?”—

*“Why was I made to hear Thy voice,
And enter where there’s room,
While thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?”*

There is something very interesting in the expression, “Who am I, O Lord GOD?” His sense of *his own nothingness* is strikingly set forth by putting the “I” side by side with “O Lord GOD.” “I David, Jesse’s son, the shepherd’s boy, who am I, O You infinite, all-commanding JEHOVAH, Creator, Preserver, Lord over all? How can I stand in Your presence? I shrink to nothing there. Did I not come of You? Do I not owe all to You? Are You not the very breath of my nostrils? And I am a nothing, a very dream, a thing of nought, and yet You look upon me, and You shower down Your mercies upon me, with a flood of blessedness do You carry me away. Who am I, O Lord GOD, and what is my house?” Thus you see David’s humility under a sense of mercy.

And let us here remark that nothing humbles a man like the mercy of God. Unkind, ungenerous remarks do not humble the soul, they rather gender pride. Under the criticisms of unkindness a man who is a man finds all that is strong within him coming to the front, and as in Job’s case, self-assertion straightway leads the van. Reproach and rebuke tend rather to make men proud than humble, love is the melting power. Nothing weighs a man down like a load of blessing. When you see God blotting out your sin, accounting you righteous in His sight, for Jesus’ sake, and saying to you, “I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn you,” where is boasting, then? It is excluded. Love shows boasting to the door, and bars its return. Peter was ready enough to speak of what he had done, but in the presence of his loving Lord, when he saw his ship sinking through the plenteous draught of fishes, he knelt down and cried in deep humiliation, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”—

*“The more Thy glories strike mine eyes
The humbler I shall lie.”*

A sight of the glory and mercy of God is sure to produce in us a sense of shame for our ill-desert, combined with wonder that God should have so much as a single kind look for us. Sit you down, then, children of God, and review His mercy and be humbled. Do not deny yourselves the joyful review because of a jealous fear of being exalted by it. Never endorse the great lie of the self-righteous, that full assurance of faith leads men to presumption. It does no such thing, it humbles a man, makes him feel his own unworthiness, and so leads him to walk more carefully and prayerfully before his God. It is in this point that faith makes us strong, for while it exalts our joys, it slays our pride and makes us shrink to nothing before the great ALL IN ALL.

II. Now observe, secondly, David’s WONDERING GRATITUDE.

He wondered, first, *at what God had done for him*—“What is my house, that you have brought me hitherto?—to a house of cedar, and to be able to talk about building a house for you, to be your chosen king, and to have my seed established on my throne, and to become the ancestor of the Christ!” Come, brethren and sisters, you do not need me to preach to you here. I should like to sit down and leave you to muse upon what the Lord has done in bringing you hitherto—up from the pit of destruction, up from the miry clay of your depravity, out of the horrible prison-house of your dread of divine wrath, away from the Egypt of darkness and bondage into light and liberty.

What an almighty work it was that brought you from darkness into light, from death into life. Bless the Lord for this. Praise Him for your calling when effectually He drew you, and you ran unto Him weeping and singing. Praise Him for your pardon when He washed you in the blood and you were clean, and you knew you were. Wonder of wonders is this! Praise Him for your justification, when He took the

robe the Savior wrought, and decked you with it, as never was bride arrayed by the most loving bridegroom. Praise Him for your regeneration, when you were born into a new world, praise Him for being set apart for holy uses, admitted to new company, filled with holy joys, instructed in heavenly truths, and dedicated to sacred duties. Praise Him for sanctification, which has made you fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Praise Him for the preservation from sin which you have hitherto received, and the education for eternity which has so happily commenced, for the provision so bounteous with which He has furnished a table in the wilderness, both temporally and spiritually, and for the protection with which He has warded off the arrow that flies by day, and the pestilence that walks in darkness. O Lord, I bless You that You have brought me hitherto.

Sometimes when I take a view of what God has done for me, I feel like Christian when he went through the Valley of the Shadow of Death by night. Remember how Bunyan pictures the scene—a narrow pathway with a pit on this side and a deep morass on that, on all sides hobgoblins, dragons, and spirits of the deep, seeking to destroy him, his sword is useless, and therefore put by in its sheath, no weapon in his hand but that of All-prayer, which he found alone to be equal to the emergency, and when he had gone through it, and the sun rose on him, and he looked back, he could not believe his eyes that he passed through it. And truly at this moment looking back on life with its innumerable temptations, and remembering the tendency to yield that is within every one of us, we can each one sing as Christian did—

*“Oh, world of wonders (I can say no less),
That I should be preserved in that distress
That I have met with here! Oh, blessed be
That hand which from it hath delivered me!
Dangers in darkness, devils, hell, and sin,
Did compass me, while I this vale was in:
Yea, snares, and pits, and traps, and nets did lie
My path about, that worthless, silly I
Might have been caught, entangled, and cast down,
But, since I live, let Jesus wear the crown.”*

David did not end his wonder there, but went on to another and greater theme, viz. *the blessings which the Lord had promised him*. He praised the Lord for what He had laid up as well as for what He had laid out. He said, and mark the words, “And this was yet a small thing in your sight, O Lord God, but you have spoken also of your servant’s house for a great while to come.” What a wonderful expression! “And this was yet a small thing in your sight.” It sometimes appears as if every mercy the Lord brings us is meant to eclipse those which have gone before. For instance, He gives a sinner pardon, and the soul is for a time perfectly content with cleansing, and expects nothing more, but soon it learns that there is such a thing as justification, and when it comes to be just with God, complete in Christ, and accepted in the Beloved, then it rejoices anew as if pardon were but a small thing compared with justification.

And lo, ere our eyes have fully drunk in the beauty of justification, we hear the word which says, “A new heart also will I give you, and a right spirit will I put within you: I will write my law in your hearts, and you shall not depart from me,” and our hearts are carried away with the splendors of sanctification.

Scarcely, however, have we been fully made aware of the extent of this blessing before another portion of the royal regalia is uncovered, and we hear it said, “They shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord God Almighty,” and now we understand that we are adopted, and are children of God. Before we fully understand this great privilege we begin to hear the song whose swell is like that of many waters, “He has made us kings and priests unto God, and we shall reign forever and ever,” and we see the royal prerogative, the priestly dignity which God has put upon us, yea, and long before even these mercies are perfectly understood we are called away to see the heavenly joys, compared with which all else will seem to be yet a small thing.

I beg you, my brethren, to remember today that your God has spoken of you for a great while to come. He has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.” Is not that for a great while to come? He has bidden you say, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” Is not that for a great while to come? He has promised to give you all you ever shall require. “No good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly.” Note well that text ever to be remembered, “Because I live you shall live also,” and that petition of our Lord, “Father, I will that they also whom you have given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.” These, and a hundred more gracious words, all concern a great while to come.

Oh, my brethren, you have not obtained transient blessings, boons which will be gone tomorrow, gifts which will decay as the year grows old and the autumn leaves flutter to the ground. You have not obtained a mercy which will leave you when you tremble in decrepitude, nay rather, when old and gray-headed your God will not forsake you, you shall still bring forth fruit in old age, to show that the Lord is upright. “When you pass through the rivers I will be with you; the floods shall not overflow you,” therefore may you boldly say, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me.” When you die you shall rise again. In your flesh you shall see God, and shall rejoice before Him. Yea, forever shall you be satisfied when you wake up in His likeness, you shall go into everlasting joy, and so shall be forever with the Lord. He has spoken to you for a great while to come. Sit down and wonder, wonder and adore for evermore—

*“Firm as the lasting hills,
This covenant shall endure,
Whose potent shalls and wills
Make every blessing sure:
When ruin shakes all nature’s frame,
Its jots and tittles stand the same.”*

David had yet another theme for wonder, which was this—the *manner of the giving of all this*. There is often as much in the manner of a gift as in a gift itself. I have known some who could refuse a favor, and give greater pleasure by their kindly-worded denial than others by their rude consent. Now, here is a mercy of which the way of giving it is, if possible, more astounding than the mercy itself, though that is amazing beyond measure, for David says, “And is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?” The word in the Hebrew is the “law.” It is never translated, except in this case, by the word “manner,” and we may keep to the word “law” if we like—“Is this the law of man, O Lord GOD?” We will render the passage first according to the Authorized Version, “Is this the manner of man?” Does man act like this? Does man pitch his love upon the unworthy? Does man exalt the lowest to the highest place? Does man forgive transgressions, and continue to do so? Does man bear provocation and return love for offenses? Is man so faithful? Is man so bounteous?

Oh, man can never be divine, and therefore man can never come up to the infinity of Your grace, O Lord God. This is not after the manner of man, neither is it after the law of man, for the law of Adam is, “In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die.” Punishment follows quick on the heels of sin. Free grace is not the law of the first man, it is the law of another man, the Second Adam, and so some render the passage, “This is the law of the Man,” the Man Christ Jesus, the true Adam. We will not contend for that rendering, but it contains a truth which we will now utter in our own words. It is not the law of man, it is the law of grace, the law of infinite mercy, the law of infallible faithfulness, the law of immutable love.

Beloved, if it had not been revealed to you, you could never have imagined or dreamed of such a fullness of grace as the Lord has actually made to pass before you. It is more marvelous than romance. It may well make your heart exult, for it is astonishing beyond all measure. Jonathan Edwards, when defending the great Calvinistic theory, made use of language somewhat to this effect, “You tell me that the doctrines of grace are a dream, then, if it be so, you ought to join with me in perpetual regret that it is

so.” I venture to say, let the earth be hung in sackcloth if there is no covenant of grace, no way of salvation by redemption, for it is the most charming of conceptions, and brings to mankind the most extraordinary of blessings. If this be dreaming, let me dream on, my God, forever. Eternal love welling up in infinite blessing to the chosen race, and pouring forth forever, inexhaustible rivers of mercy, is far above all that man could of himself have imagined. Poetry has never soared within a myriad leagues of such an imagination. I am more than content with the covenant love of my God. I ask for nothing else. This fills my soul and satisfies my spirit, and I would sit down before You, my Father, and say, “Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?” Infinite love granting infinite boons! The Gospel must be true, it bears its own witness upon its very brow, for who could have made it up? Where is the imagination that could have conceived such majestic mercy as God reveals unto His people?

III. Now, changing the note, and yet continuing in the same strain, we have to speak of David’s emotion of LOVE.

I almost regret that I have to speak to you, I wish I could sit still and yet make you feel what I feel. If there could be some electric action by which thought could be communicated without words, it would suit my mood exactly at this moment. David found but a scant outlet for his love. What precious words are these, “*What can David say more?*” It is love struck dumb by receiving an unspeakable gift. The king was exactly in the same case as Paul when he said, “What shall we then say to these things?” To that question no answer was ever given by love. Love sat silent after she had asked it, speechless in adoration, and faith pushed himself forward and cried, “If God be for us, who can be against us?” But love was silent, dumfounded with the mass of mercy. So David says, “What can David say more?” Certainly no eloquence can match the silence of human love abashed by divine love. Sit you down, O you saints, and cry, “What can Your servants say?”

Notice the childlikeness of this love. “What can *David* say more?” Your little child, if she is ill, will not say, “Mother, nurse me,” but “Mother, nurse poor little Mary,” and when she feels very sick she will say, “Mary’s head aches.” Your little John, when he wants you to play with him will say, “Please, father, take little John on your knee,” or “Please, Father, take John for a walk.” It is the way children talk, and this is David’s child-talk to God. “What shall David say more?” He might have said, “What shall I say more?” but love taught him a simple and sweet speech, which he delighted to use.

Observe, it is a love which longs for communion and enjoys it. He says, “What can David say more *unto You?*” He can talk to other people, but he does not quite know how to speak to God, and then he adds, “For You, Lord God, know Your servant,” which is a parallel passage to that of Peter, “Lord, You know all things, You know that I love you,” as if he could not speak his heart, but his Master could read it, and he besought the Lord to act as his interpreter. Such thoughts as those which were in David’s mind break the backs of words and stagger speech. Tongues are an after-thought, hearts come first, and oftentimes hearts wish they could fly away from tongues. Language is but a feeble wing, we want to ride the lightning—

*“Teach me some melodious sonnet
Sung by flaming tongues above,”*

has often been our cry. We are right enough in thinking that we can never express ourselves till we get to heaven. How does John Berridge put it in that singular hymn? I do not know if I can recall it on the spur of the moment. Yes, here it is—

*“Then my tongue would fain express
All His love and loveliness;
But I lisp and falter forth
Broken words not half His worth.*

*Vex’d I try and try again,
Still my efforts all are vain:*

*Living tongues are dumb at best,
We must die to speak of Christ."*

Death must unloose these stammering tongues, or they will never be able to speak all that we feel when divine love casts us into devout raptures. Strip us of this cumber, and we will vie with seraphs in their burning hymns, and even the heavenly harps shall learn from us how to magnify the Lord. Till then we must be content to cry with David, What can we say more? You, Lord, know Your servants.

But do you see it is obedient love as well? It is not mere sentiment, there is a practicalness about it, for he says, "Lord, you know *your servant*," he subscribes himself as henceforth bound to God's service. With delight he puts on his Master's livery, and sits like a servitor in the hall of the King of kings, waiting to hear what shall be spoken to him. As the eyes of the handmaidens are to their mistress, so his eye is up to his God.

Hence it is that David was accustomed in after times to sing, "O LORD I am your servant; I am your servant, and the son of your handmaid: you have loosed my bonds." He had caught the spirit of the Christian proverb, "To serve God is to reign." He loved to do homage at the feet of his Liege-Lord, and yield himself and all that he had as a reasonable service to Him who had crowned him with loving-kindness and tender mercies. Warm love always urges the soul to service. None are so ready to wear the yoke of Christ as those who have leaned on His bosom. The nearer we come to our Father's heart the more submissive we are to His commands. Free grace is the best atmosphere in which to grow strong in obedience. The more often we consider what we owe to eternal love the more ready we shall be to pay our vows unto the Lord.

How he dwells upon those words, "You, Lord GOD." What pleasure he finds in the very name of his Benefactor and Master. All through Scripture we ought to notice the titles by which God is called in each distinct place. We are so poverty-stricken in thought that we generally use but one name for God, not so the rich soul of David, throughout the Psalms you will find him appropriately ringing the changes upon Adonai, El, Elohim, JEHOVAH, and all the varied combinations of names which loving hearts were known to give to the glorious Lord of Hosts, and here he says, "You, Lord GOD." He delights in God, and finds music in His name, He is affluent in ascriptions and titles because his soul is rich in affection. His love was reverent love, adoring love, meditative love, intelligent love, whole-hearted love. It expresses itself by reverence when it fails to compass infinite mercy by descriptions.

I want every believer here to be sweetly stirred with this love this morning, I would have you go home and spend an hour this afternoon in contemplating the ever-blessed God, who has done so much for you that you may well say, "What can David say more unto You?"

My time is flying, but I must have space for another point. David's language is so rich that truly as I take up these words one by one I feel as if I could say with the Psalmist, "My soul shall be satisfied with marrow and fatness." Have we not marrow and fatness here?

IV. David's heart was full of PRAISE, and the praise was first for the *freeness of the grace* which brought him such blessedness.

"For your word's sake, and according to your own heart have you done all these great things." Whenever the believer asks why God gave him grace in Christ Jesus he can only resort to one answer—the Lord's own heart has devised and ordained our salvation. Why did the Lord love you, my brother? Because He would love you is the only possible reply. In the book of Deuteronomy, seventh chapter and seventh and eighth verses, we have this self-contained love set forth. The Lord did not love the people because they were numerous, but because He loved them. His love was its own reason. He loved us because He would love us, "according to His own heart."

Now, this is one of the things which always must astound us and make us love God, that everything comes from Him spontaneously, without anything in us that could produce it or call it forth. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," rolls like thunder over the rebel's head, but to a child of God it is full of music, so that voice of the Lord is

full of majesty to him. Oh, wonder of wonders, that He who passed the fallen angels by nevertheless stooped to save unworthy men, for so it seemed good in His sight.

David praised also the *faithfulness* of God. He says, “For your word’s sake.” Is not that the ground upon which all mercy is received by the child of God? God has promised it and will keep His word. He never did run back from His covenant yet—

*“As well might He His being quit
As break His promise or forget.”*

JEHOVAH must be true. Oh, what a faithful God has He been to many of us! We can recount the scores and hundreds of times when, if the promise had failed, the disaster would have been irretrievable, but it never has failed. Not one good thing has failed of all that the Lord God has promised. You men of seventy, you can say that, we who are but lads in the army are nevertheless bold to avow the same. He has helped in every need and never yet has He been backward in coming to our rescue or supplying our necessities. Glory be to His name. Let us sit down and adore His faithfulness.

Here we may also see David discerning the connection between divine mercy and the Lord Jesus Christ. What if I read it so—“For YOUR WORD’S sake”—for the sake of the Eternal Logos, the Word that was God, and was with God—for His sake all these mercies have come to us. It is very sweet to see the mark of the pierced hands on every covenant blessing, to receive every boon from the hand that was nailed to the tree for us, and to feel—

*“There’s ne’er a gift His hand bestows,
But cost His heart a groan.”*

This will lead us to praise God for the freeness of the mercy, for the faithfulness of the mercy, and for the mediatorial grace by which every mercy comes to us.

Then the king’s heart was taken up with *the greatness of the covenant blessings*. “According to your own heart, have you done all *these great things*.” They were all great. There was not a little mercy among them. All the mercies which we great sinners receive from our great God are inconceivably great, and therefore demand from us the greatest thankfulness. Dwell on the great deliverances, the great promises, the great comforts, the great expectations of the children of God, till your souls are enlarged with gratitude.

Once more David praised God for *His condescending familiarity*. “According to your own heart, have you done all these great things, *to make your servant know them*.” They were revealed to David by a prophet, just as Jesus communed with His disciples, and said, “I have told you before it came to pass, that when it is come to pass you may believe.” And yet again, “If it were not so I would have told you.” God’s mercies are instructions to us. We never know them till God brings them to us and makes us know them, they are their own interpreters, like letters written in cipher they have the clue within themselves. As the prophecies are never understood till they are fulfilled, so the mercies of God are never understood till they are received.

Experience teaches. Experience is the master doctor in the University of Christ. When you know Him by testing and handling Him, then is Jesus sweet, when you know His power by testing it in weakness, then you understand its exceeding greatness, when you know His faithfulness in deep affliction and great need, then you see it, and when you taste His mercy under a sense of great sin, then you weep with joy as you perceive it. God alone can make His servants know His gifts. Blessed be God, who alone teaches us to profit, and makes His own dear children to sit at His feet. Has He not said it, “They shall all be taught of the LORD.” No school like this, may I forever be a scholar in it, on the lowest form in that school I would be content to sit and learn eternally. Now give your souls to the sacred lesson. Praise and magnify your God, O you that love His name!

V. To conclude, not for want of matter, however, but for want of time, David's soul was wound up to HIGH THOUGHTS OF GOD, for our text concludes with these words, "Wherefore you are great, O LORD God: for there is none like you, neither is there any God beside you, according to all that we have heard with our ears."

God is great. He is the greatest because He is the best. The old Romans used to say, *optimus maximus*—the best, the greatest. You, God, are good, and therefore You are great. As we drink in the sense of His goodness we cannot help saying, "Wherefore you are great, O LORD God"—great positively, then great comparatively—"there is none like you," yea, greatest of all, superlatively—"neither is there any God beside you."

I have heard of a preacher upon whom a good man's criticism was that he made God great whenever he preached. God forbid we should ever preach otherwise, and may you, dear hearers, always feel how great God is. I pray you go away with this on your minds—He is too great for me to dare offend Him, too greatly good for me to grieve Him, too greatly good for me to doubt Him. Think of that last. So great, that nothing can be great that I can do for Him, so great, that nothing is too great for me to give to Him, so great, that when I give myself away, it is a poor offering compared with His deserts, so great, that when all earth and heaven ring with His praises, they still fall short of His glory, so goodly great and greatly good, that I would be all His, and yield myself entirely up to His will, to be like an atom in a current, borne along by His unresisted will. I would be what He would have me be, do what He would have me do, give what He would have me give, suffer what He would have me suffer, I would be absorbed into Him, I would find a heaven in a blessed union with Himself, which should prevent forever any self-assertion, or the setting up of so much as a wish or a thought which would be contrary to His mind. God is great, therefore would I wish others to know Him and love Him too. All hearts are cold in every place, would God they were melted in this fire, would God they flowed down at His touch in constant worship.

Therefore, since He is so great, I will speak great things of Him, I will tell it out among the heathen that the Lord reigns. I would ask for talent, if I may be trusted with it, with which to proclaim Him, and if I have small ability, yet with such as I have, grace being given me, I would to the utmost of my ability proclaim the greatness which has already overpowered my spirit. Let Him be crowned with majesty, let Him be King of kings and Lord of lords, because of all that He has done. Go forth, you daughters of Jerusalem, and crown your King, throughout the whole of your lives weave chaplets for the Redeemer's brow. Let your lives be psalms, let your garments be vestments, let every meal be a sacrament, let your whole being be transformed into an immortal Hallelujah unto the Lord Most High, for He is greatly to be extolled.

O, come let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, and give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name.

Blessed God, blessed God, what more can Your servant say? He has not the voice of David, nor David's harp, nor David's poetic fire, nor David's inspiration, and where even David failed, what more can he say? Lord, You know all things, you know that I love you, and thousands of your servants here can join in the same declaration. Accept what we speak and what we feel, but cannot utter. Bless Your saints forever. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—2 SAMUEL 7

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—230, 231, 775

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